

REAL PREACHING
LECTURES TO THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

NEHEMIAH BOYNTON D.D.

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REAL PREACHING

THREE ADDRESSES

TO THE

Theological Students of Oberlin

BY

REV. NEHEMIAH BOYNTON, D. D.



BOSTON

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OBERLIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

OBERLIN, O., Feb. 27, 1897.

DEAR SIR:—The faculty of Oberlin Theological Seminary cannot refrain from expressing to you their appreciation of the lectures on “The Preacher,” recently given by you in Council Hall to the students of the Seminary. The views they set forth, with rare eloquence and ample learning, were eminently just and stimulating. We enjoyed them greatly, for their inspiring effect and wise adaptation to confer lasting benefit on the young men that heard them. The ideal they presented of the Christian ministry and its work cannot fail to exert upon these young men a salutary influence. We desire that the pleasure and profit thus received from hearing them may be extended to a wider circle, that shall include, as far as possible, both those preparing for the ministry and those performing its duties.

We therefore express to you the hope that you will at your earliest convenience give the lectures to the world in a published volume.

Yours truly,

A. H. CURRIER,
G. F. WRIGHT,
OWEN H. GATES,
Committee of Faculty.

To Rev. Nehemiah Boynton, D. D.



PREFACE

These addresses, prepared in the eager desire of inspiring the young men of Oberlin Theological Seminary with a sense of the royal character of the preacher's calling, are not intended as compendiums of the topics suggested, but are rather transcripts of impressions and convictions which have been gradually realized in a most delightful and reasonably ample ministerial experience. They are printed substantially as delivered, and are given publicity because of the request of those whose judgment the author respects, and with whose wishes he is glad to comply. The addresses will have fulfilled their mission if in any slightest way they help the younger ministry to understand that the life of the sacred calling is one,

“ Whose least distinguished day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
Which makes the Sabbath lovely in the sight
Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.”

NEHEMIAH BOYNTON.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
Detroit, Mich., Nov. 1, 1897.



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I

THE REAL MAN

THE REAL MAN

The lecture of Thomas Carlyle upon "The Hero as Priest" is a ministerial pharmacopœia. With what profit it can be consulted is best known to those who have dared follow faithfully its drastic but effective prescriptions. By it many a case of "heart failure" has been subdued; many a sluggish circulation has been quickened to its normal rate; many a victim of melancholia has recovered spirit, purpose, hope! Every student for the ministry should pass before that chief of all examiners, his own conscience, a strict, searching, and uncompromising examination upon every page of this trenchant, single-purposed utterance! Speaking of Martin Luther, the man who "had to *work* an epic poem, not write one," Carlyle remarks: "It was his task to get acquainted with realities, and keep acquainted

with them, at whatever cost; his task was to bring the whole world back to reality, for it had dwelt too long with semblance."

Luther had no monopoly of this business of world recovery. Every other hero priest in the past struck hands with him; every genuine, sincere minister of to-day makes like confession of his faith, and cherishes like interpretation of the meaning of his life endeavor.

A minister is no Don Quixote, resplendent in shining armor, hurrying his spur-driven steed to death in his fantastic tilting against windmills; he is no skeleton in armor; he is a real knight, the red cross emblazoned on his breast, riding upon the King's business, which requires haste; entering the lists "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." For himself a minister must recover the sense of the unveiled actuality of life, before he can hope to convey that sense to the dreamy, somnolent world about him: he must be real himself! So far as he is concerned, the

mote will always blind his brother's vision so long as the beam blurs his own. The essential of the ministry is neither theological, nor homiletical, nor oratorical; it is personal. It is the man, inspired by the reality of a great love, ennobled by the absoluteness of a supreme ideal, and bent beneath the royal burden of a strenuous, exacting, but world-enriching and actual service.

"When God calls very loud at the time you are born," remarked one of the princely preachers of our century, "standing at the door of life, and says, 'Quarter of a man, come forth!' that man is not for the ministry. 'Half a man, come forth!' no: that will not do for a preacher. 'Whole man, come!' that is *you*! The man must be a man, and a full man, that is going to be a true Christian minister, and especially in those things which are furthest removed from selfishness and the nearest in alliance with true divine love."

A man's ministry must be the natural, sequential corollary of the real proposition of his life: any other will be spurious, fatuous, imbecile. Not until the house built

on the sand can rival the security of that founded on the rock, in the face of descending rain, coming floods, and blowing wind; not until sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, masquerading as love, can become such, will a hollow-souled, artificial, unreal man become a true minister, or a "priest after the order of Melchizedek," "burning with mild, equable radiance, as the enlightener of daily life"!

It is of the first importance, therefore, that he who looks toward the most sublime, exalted, and soul-satisfying of all life-work, the ministry, should explore himself; work the deep mines of passion and purpose in his soul; assay the ore, that he may be assured at the start if the mine is worth developing, if the investment of his life—the only one he will ever have a chance to place—will yield a return with which he will be content, after a score, after two score years.

A superficial motive, swaying the sceptre of your life, means a supercilious, emasculated ministry, the end of which is sometimes a degenerate book agent, sometimes an itinerant insurance solicitor, sometimes a

“devourer of widows’ houses” through ill-advised land speculation, but, always, a Sahara, with crows and carrion, and never one oasis to relieve the dreary waste of unmitigated failure.

Many come to the ministry, drifting upon the swelling tide of a besetting influence, fanned by the gentle, grateful breezes of fond and admiring friends. Young men are told of their remarkable qualifications for the ministry by those whose ignorance is only surpassed by the brazen assurance of their unsanctified confidence. As a result, there is no deep-souled grip of purpose, no resolute heroism, no utter sincerity or genuine self-committal. “Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” Certain as the rigorous and unaccommodating coming of Sunday, with its peremptory demand for two sermons, is it that such a soul will loathe “this light bread,” and sigh for “the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic” which it “did eat in Egypt freely”!

Contemporary history illustrates—substi-

tuting a pseudonym. The following appeared recently in a metropolitan journal:

“WILL BECOME A BOOK AGENT.

“Rev. LOOKALONG THE BACKWARDWAY
Temporarily gives up his Rectorship!

“Rev. Mr. Backwardway says he is tired of preaching, and needs a rest; therefore he is going to become a book agent. He has secured a position with a certain magazine exchange and will hereafter hustle for it. His full explanation of the change is that his creative faculties are on the wane or have become worn out temporarily. He has fallen into a rut, and he had to choose between becoming a drug on the preaching market or embarking into something else and giving his brain a chance to recuperate. He hopes by the end of six months that he will be able to resume his place in the ministry. He came to this city fresh from a theological seminary, and without other experience plunged enthusiastically into reform work. He will preach his farewell sermon next Sunday.”

Farewell, Rev. Mr. Lookalong The Back-

wardway! Doubtless the pulpit will never ring again with your nasal, hollow verbiage, and doubtless, too, this will be your noblest contribution to the coming of the kingdom of God!

It is safe to affirm that the colored brother never celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination who gave as his reason for entering the ministry,—

“Dis ere sun am so hot,
Dis ere cotton row am so long,
Dis ere hoe am so heavy,
Dat dis ere nigger suspects he is called to
de ministry.”

The Rev. Mr. Cream Cheese, adored rector of Mrs. Potiphar, queen of “our best society,” will not have strength sufficient through a series of years for the arduous toils of a great parish, especially by reason of the sacred confidences he must cherish, the discriminating advice he must dispense, when beneath the inspiring and exhausting joy of his pastoral ministry he spends a whole afternoon with Mrs. Potiphar, sipping wine, tasting cold chicken, and announcing a judgment, weighty and memorable, upon

the vexed question of the appropriate color of the velvet upon the cover of her prayer-book: "Bind your prayer-book in pale blue, the color of skim-milk, dear Mrs. Potiphar, which is so full of pastoral associations."

Dear soul! he will not die in the harness unless one of those swift, and sometimes satisfactory providences, shall cut him off and relieve the world ere half his life is spent!

Sir Walter Besant has written a short but powerful story, in which, with keen insight, is depicted the awful consequence of the union of an ambitious purpose and a hollow heart. "Before the altar rails in the chancel of an old Norman cathedral, stand a company of young men, seeking admission into the holy office of priesthood. Among them is one distinguished from all the rest by the priestly qualities which are apparently his, the noble form, open countenance, rich, musical voice, and a 'fervor of devotion amounting almost to rapture.'" This is your introduction to Rev. Paul Leighan; your leave-taking is through a warden's letter written after Leighan's death in a prison, between which

and the cathedral rolls the expanse of the mighty ocean.

Paul Leighan had a "love for things ecclesiastical, but he had no religion at all," and, consequently, to the highest bidder he would sell everything he had, himself included. It is not necessary to trace his treading of the tortuous downward path. He became a liar and a thief; he plagiarized; to ease the strain upon his pocket-book, he traveled, now as leading tenor of a minstrel company, now as star in a theatrical venture, his specialty being that of the "comic curate"; he reformed, became a remarkable exhorter and soldier in the Salvation Army under the name of "The Frisky Deacon"; he abused a loyal woman's love, fled across the sea for safety, took a parish, in which for a time he was regarded as a man of exceptional eloquence and deep piety; he joined a company of swindlers; was imprisoned, and in prison died. His characteristic was the "form of godliness"; his hideous lack was "the power thereof." He is an exaggerated, but nevertheless a real, illustration of the inevitable fruition of a spurious or of a secondary motive. There

is but one consummation, but one finale, and that is utter, absolute, irremediable disaster. Language cannot be too explicit, words too plain, influence too powerful, in exploiting with all sympathy, but with equal fidelity, the life peril of espousing the ministry through ill-considered, inadequate, or insufficient motives.

This motive is the keystone of your life arch. Quarry for it, and when you have once exhumed it, put it in its elevated position in your soul, where you may reaffirm it every day, and where you can be reinvigorated by its genial, strengthful companionship. It must be great enough to make you content with the limitations you will encounter. A white tie about the neck, a clerical vest over the chest, and a scowl on the brow will breed more practical unbelief than a score of heretical sermons. The minister whose calling has lost its hopefulness, its content, its smile, and has retained only its ecclesiasticism and a few old sermons, is always "a quarter of a man" who has lost his other "three quarters," which is the towering grandeur of a motive which can sway him.

The motive must be great enough to choke to death any incipient jealousy of your college classmate who has received his life portion in abounding wealth, while you are daily growing poor. If you are not willing to be poor for the sake of the opportunity of ministering to others, in heaven's name quit now, for your motive is not strong enough. You will evolve into an elongated grumbler, not a Christian minister. Your motive must be supreme enough to grant you decision in peremptorily refusing to be high priest of expediency, and to officiate at the elaborate but eviscerated ceremonies at which principle is slain, amid hosannas and hallelujahs, upon the brazen altar of policy.

The mariner can sail without a compass; the mechanic can work without a forge; the merchant can trade without capital; but the minister cannot live without a motive: it is absolutely for him a *sine qua non*. With it he is a giant; without it he is not even a germ. Every minister knows how Savonarola felt when he wrote to his needy mother "to forgive him if he has nothing but prayers to offer to his family, since his

religious profession precludes him from helping them in other ways." But also does every minister claim kinship with him as he further writes, "Know, then, that this heart of mine is more than ever bent on devoting my soul and body and all the knowledge granted to me by God, to his service and my neighbor's salvation." Problem: Subtract from Savonarola his motive, and what is the probability of his ever being Prior of St. Mark's, or yielding his life in his endeavor to make Jesus Christ King of Florence?

There is in existence a short but precious paper, dated March 3, 1822. These words, among others, are written there:

"What can I do? Lord, here I am, a sinner. Take me. Take all that I have and shall have; all that I am and shall be; and do with me as seemeth good. If Thou hast anything for me to do; if Thou hast anything for me to suffer in the cause of that Saviour on whom I rest my all, I am ready to labor, to suffer, or to die. I am ready to do anything for Thee." Oh, think you that Horace Bushnell had no need of that radiant self-committal in his after-life, that life

so tangled, so twisted, so tempest-tossed, but so calm, so noble, so expanding? I tell you that enthroned motive, that swelling purpose, saved Bushnell to his God, his world, his ministry, himself.

A young man, brilliant as a diamond, keen as a stiletto's edge, is turning away from the law as a profession, and is attracted to the ministry. He is wide-eyed, he is expert in consequences, he is not drifting, he is sailing by the stars. Here is his memorandum:

"June 12, 1841. My birth night. I have been for the last hour on the sea-shore, not dreaming, but thinking deeply and strongly, and forming determinations which are to affect my destiny through time and through eternity. Before the sleeping earth and the sleepless sea and stars, I have devoted myself to God: a vow never (if he gives me the faith I pray for) to be recalled."

Can you think of Charles Kingsley, who used to sign himself in letters to personal friends, Boanerges Roar-at-the-clods; who said as his final word to his Eversley charge, "to live with Christ in the next world you must live like Christ in this"; whose life was such a complete compendium of his words—

can you think of him as really achieving, apart from the sacred coronation of that holy hour before the sleeping earth and the sleepless sea and stars?

If Savonarola, Bushnell, Kingsley and every other minister who has wrought mightily has done it in the strength of an enthroned motive, surely you and I can ill afford to ignore what was to them the essential. You cannot be either one of these. You can be something better—you can be yourself, commissioned by your God, charged with your message, electrified with your motive. Oh, get a motive for entering the ministry! Get a commission from God, a call which shall evidence itself through the sentinel of a victorious motive forever triumphantly making his rounds in your life. Espouse the undergirding life purpose; not in the dream which “came to a pale poet’s sleep,” but in the decision of a holy and luminous waking hour, gratefully confess:

“I am singled out by God,
No sin must touch me.”

This emerging, essential motive, indeed a new birth from above, a new power from

on high, will never permit itself to become quiescent, docile, occasional: at once it is evidential, imperative, constant. Its mission is to deliver the life *to* its glorious purpose and *from* whatever obstacles and hindrances cut right and left with flaming sword and dispute the soul's passage through their territory to its own. The characteristic of this motive for which I plead is wholeness: it is complete. Therefore it demands the area of a whole life for its exercise; nothing less will grant it a sufficient orbit.

The *mere* ecclesiastic has devoted a portion of himself. He has set his affection on organization, ritual, ceremony. He awakens in you the resentful temper which in Kingsley found explosive vent: "I begin to hate these dapper young ladies' preachers like the devil."

The *mere* theologian has contributed his hair-splitting and logic-chopping faculties. As a student he may be preëminent, but as a minister among men he is more certain to be a Mr. Dry-as-dust than a Mr. Great-heart.

The *mere* preacher—oh, God deliver the

ministry from the *mere* preachers!—toys with the ministry on Sunday, and during the week regrets his inability personally to visit the people.

The *mere* pastor dispenses through the week calling cards, keeps a most elaborate record of visitation, sometimes even noting topics of conversation for future use, and on Sunday “occupies the pulpit.”

Each has attempted the impossible! You cannot get the whole ministerial motive into part of your life. So towering, so sublime, so godlike is this motive that it will never accept a percentage as an equivalent for the whole. Jonathan Edwards discovered this and early wrote: “Resolved, that I will live with all my might while I do live.” Robertson, too, was no stranger to it, and resolved, that “I will believe in myself.” Since this motive calls for all your life, no part of that life can be indifferent.

St. Francis used to call his body his brother Asinus, and declared that it needed rough treatment. The old idea of spiritual health was always bodily mortification. The true idea is bodily perfectness in order to spiritual robustness.

The care of health as a ministerial duty may be urged on many grounds, but ultimately on this: You are giving your lives to the expression of a deep-souled motive, therefore let there be in bodily vigor no impediment to its largest manifestation. A minister needs a physique, because no other calling makes so varied and exhausting a drain upon vitality.

It is sometimes asked why a minister with but two sermons a week should be more weary than a lawyer who prepares a brief and makes a plea every day. The answer of experience is that a minister's strength is tapped at more points than a lawyer's. To throw one's self into a mood is an exhausting process, but to throw one's self into a dozen is very much more so. What a draft upon the physical resources of a man a day's record of the scenes of a clerical life will exhibit! In the morning there is the study—more close, faithful, intense, as the man is beneath the influence of his motive. This is the mental draft. In the afternoon, his sympathy is stirred by the suffering of the sick-room; his indignation boils at the confidential nar-

ration of some dark outrage of iniquity on innocence, of strength upon weakness; his courage must buttress some tottering spirit; his calm faith must fit out a soul evidently setting sail on a boisterous sea. On the way from the home within the valley of the shadow of death, to the home which has just experienced some bounding family joy, he must readjust himself, that he may not tarnish, by sombre look, the bright, glad lustre of the shining hour. In the evening, it is an address, a business conference, a social function, so that at the end of the day he finds that the varied moods into which he has been obliged to throw himself to accomplish his ministry have taxed him at every point. His legs are weary, brain tired, nerves twitch, sympathies are lacerated, risibles exhausted! The whole man has been exercised by the whole motive. And this is his business! How can it be transacted by a physical incompetent! You do not help your case by pleading that some noble ministers have been physical underlings. Exceptions never establish. If you fail of conscience in the care of your body—the temple of the Holy Ghost—you may pos-

sibly secure the second or third, but never the first, achievement of your ministry.

So, also, does the whole motive enlist the habits of your life. Soiled linen, unbrushed clothing, muddy boots, teeth which have been left to their own destruction, finger nails dressed in deep black, mourning the loss of all things, a general unkempt, slack appearance, is sufficient evidence, in some cases, to demonstrate that the possessor has mistaken his calling.

The use of tobacco, which is probably on the increase in the ministry as in other life, and which is gradually being esteemed as an indifferent habit, I do not regard as such. No habit is indifferent. Everything counts. The distinguished divines who evolve their great thoughts amid the curling smoke and grateful incense of the fragrant Havana are quite unanimous in their paternal counsels to the young to avoid their peccadillos. Very many of them cannot shut their consciences up in their cigar boxes or tobacco pouches, write over them the inscription, "*Requiescat in pace,*" and dwell in content. The uneasy corpse will once in a while turn in its

coffin, and the turning very frequently introduces an embarrassing and delicate situation.

Young men, a meerschauum cannot make—it can unmake—a minister! A sermon is not better for being conceived in smoke, nor can a pastor's visit in a sick-room be more welcome because he leaves a nauseating odor behind him! The ministerial motive which challenges your whole life will not fail to throw its gauntlet before all your habits of personal indulgence, and, as you value your largest life accomplishment, you will not, in the lofty disdain of your selfish complacency, dismiss this particular challenge as unworthy of your steel.

The habit of courtesy is among the most important of those conspicuously swayed by the ministerial motive. Politeness is “polished civility”; courtesy is “respectful address and manner.” The home of politeness in society is on the surface; of courtesy, in the depths of the soul. The valet of politeness is suavity; of courtesy, sincerity. The polite man may be like Wordsworth's moralist,

“One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form nor feeling great or small.”

The courteous soul is Shakespeare's “noblest Roman of them all,”

“the elements

So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, ‘This was a man!’”

Courtesy is character in high relief; it is the shining of the soul, the transfiguration of the spirit. The polite man may be courteous, the courteous man must be polite.

A minister must expect to be interviewed, interrupted, and, to a degree, imposed upon by all sorts and conditions of men! The hobby rider wants to make a pleasure park of an hour or two of a minister's precious time in which he may exercise his usually spavined Bucephalus, which like Alexander's famous steed, “only himself can or cares to ride”!

The sonorous-voiced reformer, whose apology for intellectual astigmatism is an impudent, conceited cock-sureness of vision of the land o' the leal, and the highway leading to it, and who, by the way, has never meditated upon Carroll D. Wright's

stinging bon mot, "When any one proposes a solution, I move to adjourn,"—this bumptious individual makes frequent incursions into the territory of a minister's choicest seclusions, and wages the sham fight of his guerrilla warfare with ministers—"stall fed, hypocritical, cowardly ministers"—as his imaginary foes. You will be expected to witness the engagement, praise the valor of this skeleton in armor, confess the righteous doom of your brethren in Christ, marvel that you yourself have been thus far spared, and pledge your troth that henceforth you will renounce all allegiance save to this bold cavalier, who poses not alone as a mighty warrior, but as

"A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!"

This Moses-deliverer, this "second Daniel come to judgment" is to me the most exasperating, gall-stirring, spleen-exciting son of Adam who ever crosses the threshold of my ministerial life. But he crosses it!

The man with his petty spite wants to unload. The woman with her impossible and visionary scheme for the amelioration

of the condition of her sex, which usually includes a position for herself as matron, wants your endorsement and contribution. The irritable man wants to display his usually harmless and uninteresting pyrotechnics. The keen, pitiless sister, who detected a mispronunciation, or an unseemly use of grammar in your last Sunday's sermon, but who is innocent as a new-born babe of the intent of your discourse, desires an interview that she may solace herself, and for once observe you arrayed in dust and ashes! The "little ones" come whose burdens are so great to them, and who find such comfort and relief in displaying their small wares in the minister's presence that they forget that possibly this may be his busy day. The natural logician, who, having never studied theology himself, for that reason thinks himself competent to be censor of yours; that most to be pitied spirit, not quite brainless enough for an asylum, nor quite equipped for the life struggle, a harmless, ignorant, but frequently present bore—all these, as well as the strong, sweet, inspiring visitations, are part of a minister's daily experience. To be a

minister to them all, self-contained, dignified, approachable, sympathetic, courteous, yet manly, courageous, independent—in this ability resides no small part of a minister's acceptability among men.

Small considerations are not only the tomb but the tabernacle of great things. Many and many a man, laying aside for trivial cause and in humble presence the royal robes of his native courtesy, and pompously arraying himself in the gaudy fabrics of scorn, impatience, anger, has snapped the spinal cord of his influence. Many and many a man, by his courtesy in a boisterous, passionate hour, permitting billows of boiling wrath to dash against his impervious manhood, harmless as the spray-flinging waves against the granite of the shore, has in that hour established himself. A minister is a man!

This principle of courtesy reaches to the pulpit. It takes a young minister some time to sharply distinguish between the vigorous enunciation of principle and the unmanly, unwise, unchristian use of personalities. It is greatly to be regretted that the fathers in Israel are in many instances,

in this regard, so poor examples for the young Timothys to follow.

Nowhere is it so "excellent to have a giant's strength," and nowhere is it so "tyrannous to use it like a giant," as in the pulpit. Men do not bring in the kingdom of God by an unworthy use of a great advantage. The minister who, safely barricaded behind the proprieties of the house of God, which deny the privilege of formal reply from the pew to formal statement by the pulpit, uses his sacred trust to vent small spite, air petty grievances, assail personal character, is beneath the contempt of decent men. The evacuation of his soul by the spirit of courtesy will leave him a prey to his own insincerity. It requires a deal of moral courage at times to withstand the popular demand for the pommeling by the pulpit of some special sinner above others; but a noble restraint, a heroic courtesy, an incisive handling of the involved principle, served without the hard sauce of personality, saves the pulpit, the preacher and the principle. It is by incarnation of principle, not by inveighing of personalities, that men

climb on "stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things!"

Beyond the corraling of habit to the service of the masterful motive, the real man forever strives to INFORM HIMSELF.

Ministers are of two classes. There are those whose profession springs from their lives; there are those whose lives spring from their profession. The one class is continually, in the spirit of a large vision, *getting ready for life*; the other, in the small horizon of a microscopic glance, is always *preparing for next Sunday*. The one believes in the development of *self*, holding—

"Self is the man: who thrones and crowns
would claim

Must personally be worthy of the same."

The other esteems the development of the theme for Sunday the consequential business of the week. The latter reads in a narrow, partisan and scrappy fashion. His sermons have an unction which suggests a lurking doubt in the recesses of his own soul; and the doubt is usually there! In his pulpit utterances there is a combination of the hortatory and the hysterical, a sug-

gestion of the emptiness of flying foam, rather than of the endurance of firm foundations.

Ecclesiastical dime museums on the Lord's day, where sensational preachers dishonor God in their zealous but mistaken regard for man, are usually operated by those before whose life stalks forever the tall, ungainly interrogation point, with its solitary, parrot-like accomplishment in language, "What shall I do for next Sunday?" An article in the magazine received late Saturday, a social scandal, a proposed municipal reform, or a rustle among the branches of the wide-spreading tree of temperance, is to him like a sail to a castaway on his raft in mid-ocean, or a sentence in his native tongue to a man in the land of the stranger. "Getting ready for next Sunday," as the business of a man's life, is like building a road from Boston to San Francisco merely to carry a morning and an evening passenger. Before long this minister's life will become a parasite within the shell of his profession!

On the other hand, the minister whose profession springs from his life will forever

be striving for self-equipment; for more stately mansions for his soul "as the swift seasons roll." A continual recession greets his departure from his "low-vaulted past." His mind is a reservoir into which he continually pumps the living water from many a mountain spring, and from which he slakes the thirst of the people! His reading is wide; his food is brought from afar; he studies the opposite side; he puts himself in the other's place; he seeks not for triumph, but for truth; his concern is with great subjects, and his experience is that from these the Sunday sermon

"droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath."

A life made more ample by a varied, broad, and sumptuous literary diet, means an enriched profession—a Sunday sermon which shall be not merely a smile, a tear, or a lisped and vapid "God bless you," but a brain, a backbone, a heart.

It was emancipation day in the life of Wilberforce when by his own confession "in his later years he gave up preparing sermons and simply prepared himself!"

The minister who "prepares himself," makes the most virile, the most conscientious, and the most effective preparation for Sunday.

Among the many possible departments of literary self-culture—poetry, science, fiction, history, biography,—I select at this time, for emphasis, a single one, namely, *the great lives of your own profession!* It will exalt your conception of the calling to which you have consecrated your life, to know Moses not simply as a patriarch, Isaiah as a prophet, Paul as an apostle; but each as a minister laying his life to the same splendid purpose as your own; to appreciate as your fellow-craftsman Ignatius, on every fragment of whose martyred heart was found written in letters of gold, so the legend runs, the name of Jesus, and whose thrilling word, which made Polycarp, and has made many a man since, was: "Be steadfast as a smitten anvil, for it is the part of a great athlete to receive blows and conquer." To know him as a brother is to add new wealth to your capital. That St. Francis and St. Bernard are of your fraternity, Savonarola of your ilk, yokes your life with the noblest born of earth.

Nor does the lustre fade in modern times. Newman, Maurice, Kingsley, Robertson, Stanley, Spurgeon, in England; Edwards, Brainerd, Beecher, Bushnell, Goodell, and latest—and I had almost said most beautiful—A. J. Gordon, in America; the study of these fascinating, diversified, hope-exalted, doubt-driven, heresy-scorned, toil-smitten, faithful, royally noble lives, will widen out a man's conceptions, lift his ideal, stir his soul purposes, till in heartfelt, prideful gratitude he will exclaim, "Thank God, I, too, am a minister!"

They were so splendidly human, these giants of the faith, while so utterly earnest! Their lives were so diverse, their tastes so singular, their experiences so individual! They found their recreations in different employments; they did "battle royal" on widely separate fields of war; they lived their great-hearted years under clear and cloudy sky; they studied, served, suffered, with uncompromising fidelity. So royal, so brave, so towering are they all that you want to write beneath the life of each, Longfellow's description of the theologian "of Cambridge on the Charles," who—

“preached to all men everywhere
The Gospel of the Golden Rule,
The new commandment given to men,
Thinking the deed and not the creed
Would help us in our utmost need.
With reverent feet the earth he trod,
Nor banished nature from his plan,
But studied still with deep research
To build the Universal Church,
Lofty as is the love of God
And ample as the wants of man.”

Beyond books, there are men; and the study of persons is quite as essential to an informed soul as that of parchments.

Practical observation is a university of itself. Dickens could not more profitably employ midnight hours than by walking London streets, finding and watching characters; Burns could write no more touching poem than that of the “Wee Mousie,” whose home, on the bleak winter’s day, he saw so rudely destroyed by the cruel plow-share, and whose unceremonious ejection taught the lesson that

“The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men
Gang aft a-gley.”

The Rev. Mr. Morgan, of Greenwich, Conn., if he knew little of books, still had a sense of his parishioners' vexations and difficulties, which, on the practical side, made him a minister not to be despised.

"Wall, our minister," said the venerable deacon, "gives so much attention to his farm and orchard that we get pretty poor sermons, but he is mighty movin' in prayer in caterpillar and canker-worm time!"

There was a deal of philosophy in the practice of that outrageous pedagogue, Mr. Squeers, who, having taught the boy to spell and parse "horse," sent him to groom the aforesaid animal, with the promise of a sound thrashing if the grooming did not reveal an intimate acquaintance with the beast's pelt!

Robertson was a student, but he became the apostle of the workingmen by entering into their lives. Kingsley loved to burn the midnight oil, but on the cholera committee he probably gained information which was invaluable. Bushnell was an inspirational theologian, but his efforts for a public park were high-priced yet competent tutors to his great spirit.

A priest and a Protestant minister have been sitting on the jury in New Haven. The duty has put dynamite beneath their habits of work. The rude noises of the world have supplanted the quiet of their morning's study, but besides their ministry to the public, they have beyond doubt embossed their shields and sharpened their swords. Bringing their ideals to court has blessed justice and the ideals, too! Their sermons have not suffered from being conceived in the halls of the blind-eyed goddess, nor been injured by being tinctured with the essence of actual life.

It is a constant declaration concerning ministers that, in Josh Billings's phrase, "they know a great many things that ain't so." Measurably true is the charge, it must be confessed, but usually that minister is acquitted whose motive is strong enough to drive him daily to his study, and daily, also, to his parish. A healthy ideal forever seeks a human incarnation. The really spiritual will seek for clothing the royally practical. A well-informed minister knows books, and he knows men, who are the raw

material out of which books, which "are the life-blood of master spirits," are made.

The real man, the executive of the swelling monarchical motive, which dominates his habits and informs his life, aspires to leadership. A minister, if he is anything, is a leader.

Tennyson, singing his immortal requiem to the sacred memory of Arthur Hallam, chants,—

"How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead."

What, then, of the man who has resolved upon a life's communion with the living; who is to interpret men to themselves, to inspire their nobility, to lead out the lagging resolutions of their overlaid consciences?

An effective leader is composite. He must possess not only resolution but restraint. His must be not only a patient faith, but a noble fear. His reserves must be as disciplined as his advancing hosts. He must thoroughly master that difficult

but essential lesson, that to wait is conquest oftentimes, where impetuous advance is but the prelude to ignominious defeat. They laughed at a Massachusetts governor in the colonial days, because he was so thoroughly controlled by his wife. "A man," said the sage publicist, "must learn to be governed himself before he can govern others."

To come to the kingdom at such a time as this, an aspirant for the leadership of love, is to combine a rare privilege with a stupendous responsibility. If ever the ministry were under bonds to "play the man," it is so to-day. On the one hand crumbling, on the other, construction; here a fond grasp of an outworn tradition, there a bold capture of a citadel of error; the capitalist seeking support, the workingman justice; small race wars in communities in which the dirty immigrant infringes upon the *comfort* of the dainty life resident, and the *wages* of the man who arrived the day before him; the tendency to the separation of classes; the need of democracy in churches,—a need not always sure to be clearly discovered by politic deacons or for-

revenue-only trustees; all these call piteously to-day for men of God, who will not only emit diatribes, but who will develop measures; who will construct as well as condemn. A leadership which rouses only the pugnacious spirit of the church, a spirit which is the very opposite of that wrath which is slow to rise and ready to abate, makes at best only a meagre contribution to the urgent situation. A leadership which quits the church, as if it were a sinking ship, and advocates independent action, is likewise, usually, of questionable value.

Mrs. Phelps-Ward, in "A Singular Life," has drawn with rare insight and with truly sanctified sagacity the character of a real leader. You follow him in his manly efforts, his brave struggles and modest achievements with increasing sympathy and admiration. You cannot forget, however, that he is all the while doing what, though for him, perhaps, a necessary thing, would bring untold calamity to great interests if generally espoused by the opening ministry of the day. Nor can you escape the longing that the same pen would give you a sketch of another Bay-

ard, who in church fellowship should work out his leadership. The present day problem, the burning question, is not how to conduct an independent mission, important as that may be: it is how to lead the great, strong, sleeping Church of God to Bayard's work! It is not how to touch low, needy life *without* the church—any one can do that—but how to touch it within the church, by making the church esteem her privilege and accept her responsibility. He who, in the eager, restrained, plodding, but uncompromising spirit of a determined leadership, quietly but increasingly infuses his own God-given convictions into the life of his church, and one by one opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, and quickens lagging footsteps, is a braver man than he who, loving "the garish day," turns his back upon the Church as anti-Christ, and single handed attempts to "hew Agag in pieces before the Lord."

Do you know Bishop Welcome, that stately, sublime, and, above all, spiritual creation of Victor Hugo, in "Les Misérables"? Have you caught his spirit? To me he is the towering character in all fic-

tion,—certainly the most ideal portraiture of a minister I have ever found. The first hundred pages of “*Les Misérables*” contain the choicest suggestions upon pastoral theology in literature, and by every earnest student should, in the solitude of his soul, in presence of his supreme life resolution, be carefully, even prayerfully, conned and lingered over till they are his own. A minister can always recover a flickering confidence, or a receding courage, by an hour with Bishop Welcome.

The Episcopal palace adjoined the hospital. The palace was very grand; spacious its drawing-rooms, ample its chambers. The principal courtyard was large; the walks encircling it led beneath arcades in the old Florentine fashion, and in the gardens grew magnificent trees. The hospital was a small, one-story building, with a meagre garden. It was overcrowded. The bishop created unspeakable consternation by declaring at the outset that there must be some mistake. “There are thirty-six of you in five or six small rooms,” said he to the director of the hospital. “There are three of us here, and we have room for sixty.

There is some mistake, I tell you; you have my house, and I have yours."

The bishop regulated his household expenses so that one fifteenth went to himself and fourteen fifteenths to his work. He entered into the real lives of his flock and shared hardship with them. "He stripped himself!" The only luxury he would tolerate was his garden. This he kept in exquisite order. His haughty housekeeper reproved him, saying, "You, who turn everything to account, have at least one useless spot. It would be better to grow salads there than bouquets." "Madam," retorted the bishop, "you are mistaken. The beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added after a pause, "More so, perhaps."

The peasant bishop went to a synod once. He came back before the session was over. "I embarrassed them," he said. "I produced on them the effect of an open door."

He displeased his brother bishops. Among other strange things, it is said that in an Episcopal residence of marvelous beauty, he remarked, "What beautiful clocks! What beautiful carpets! They must be a great

trouble. I would not have all those superfluities crying incessantly in my ears: 'There are people who are hungry! There are people who are cold! There are poor people! There are poor people.' "

He was *leading* others all the while.

He gave the hospitality of his home once, with royal brotherhood, to an ex-convict and a tramp. His reward was, that the tramp stole his silver—his spoons and forks. Arrested and brought back by the police, judge the amazement of the culprit to hear the bishop take his part, declaring he had given not only these, but the valuable candlesticks as well. "Jean Valjean opened his eyes wide and stared at the venerable bishop with an expression which no human tongue can render any account of."

"You may retire, gentlemen," said the bishop to the police.

"Jean Valjean was like a man on the point of fainting. The bishop drew near to him and said in a low voice: 'Do not forget, never forget, that you have promised to use this money in becoming an honest man.'

“Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of ever having promised anything, remained speechless. The bishop emphasized the words when he uttered them. He resumed, with solemnity, ‘Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you. I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God.’ ”

Here was princely manhood. Here was royal leadership. Jean Valjean saw light for the first time that hour. His whole being was changed. He never saw the bishop again, but when that good man died the ex-convict put on mourning. He himself developed a wonderful character, and when the death dew was on his brow, and his friends asked him if he desired a priest, he simply said, “I had one once!”

The bishop was a real man, a true leader, rearing what he loved to call the most beautiful of altars,—“The soul of an unhappy creature consoled and thanking God.”

But the illustration of the “Real Man” is before us in life. We may be gratefully proud that he is in our own denomi-

nation. Easily the prince among our preachers, Dr. Richard Storrs is no less prince among our men. No honors were too choice for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination only a few weeks ago. But among all the gifts of the admiring, and the encomiums of the elect representatives from those wide-reaching spheres of life and thought, which he had so nobly dignified by his influence, or promoted by his patient and brilliant scholarship, surely none was more grateful to him than the loving cup presented by his brothers in the sacred calling. The ivy about its brim spoke of the immortality of friendship. The water lily, delicately traced, symbolized that eloquence of which he is so charming a master, while the legend encircling all, not only italicized his own conviction, but fittingly expressed the great, deep-souled truth of a true preacher's essential and real manhood.

"Sermo animi est imago: qualis vir, talis et oratio est." The sermon is the reflection of the soul: as is the man, so also is his utterance.

II
THE REAL SERMON



THE REAL SERMON

The ecclesiastic has had his day, and his face is towards the setting sun. Gradually his power declines, for life is becoming too tense and the struggle between the modern Ormuzd of light and Ahriman of darkness too engaging to permit leadership in the person either of the spurious or the artificial. The ecclesiastic is the disciple of form, and the plea and demand of the world to-day is for faith, rugged, courageous, independent faith.

The temptation to a ministry of mere exhibition is, happily, removed from modern life in a very large degree; but in its place has come a temptation opposite in character and no less pernicious in effect.

It will one day be discovered that the minister as an executive is at quite as much of a remove from his real office as the

mere ecclesiastic. The last quarter of a century has witnessed the growth of specialism everywhere. The student in college specializes. The country store no longer exists; in its place are half a dozen others. If the great department stores, which are a doubtful blessing, are a returning approach to the country store, the approach is thoroughly vaccinated with the virus of specialization, for the store is really a dozen or twenty shops under one roof and one management. The doctor is a surgeon, an oculist, an aurist, and a general practitioner only to splice his slender resources till he can devote himself profitably to his chosen specialty. Likewise the lawyer; likewise, too, the servant girl. The man of all work has become a restricted spirit; the inside man is one, the outside man another, and, like the Jews and Samaritans of old, they have no dealings with each other.

The church is the last of all institutions to accept and adopt the principle. Most of our churches are conducted on the plan of the old country store, and where you find inefficient churches in cities of considerable

size, it will not infrequently be found that the reason is that these churches are being conducted on the same lines which were efficient when the city was a village, but which, under municipal or metropolitan conditions, are woefully and sometimes ridiculously antique. To carry the church over, and reinvigorate it with modern methods for present urgencies, is the task of most open-eyed ministers just at this present moment.

This task brings the great temptation, especially to active temperaments, to become an *executive*; to spend one's major forces in bringing things to pass; to be transformed into a "religious promoter," a church "captain of industry." Many a time there seems to be nobody but the minister either to be concerned about the necessities or to provide for them, which makes the temptation greater and calls for a principle of resistance, the nerves of which shall be fed with the tonic of a definite conception of ministerial business and purpose. "Small considerations are the tomb of great things," and many a preacher is being ruined to-day to make an overseer or

a floor-walker, an entry clerk or petty accountant in the church.

Now the fact is that you can be but one thing predominantly; and still another fact is that the *one* great business of the minister is to be the evangelist,—the herald of glad tidings, the preacher of righteousness. If the influence of the pulpit declines, it will be because its moral authority has been weakened by reason of partial abandonment. Men have been planning societies instead of sermons. I confess my great concern for a remodeled church, but my even greater concern for a recovered pulpit. A minister's great occasion is his exposition of truth. If he minds his own business in royal fashion, all these other necessary things will be added unto him.

I have never found a better definition of preaching than that given me when I was sitting, as you are, in presence of the cherished anticipation of future usefulness. "Preaching," said my honored professor, "is making men think and feel in proportion as they think. The sermon thus is truth clarified in thought and kindled in feeling. It is potential when completed in

the study; it is actual only when sent forth from the pulpit."

"It takes two," says Thoreau, "to speak truth: one to speak; one to hear." The preparation is one; the preaching is another: both make the sermon.

Dr. Holmes tells us that if we want to be healthy we must have a care to select discreetly our ancestors, and by his pleasant wit reminds us that the sources of health are quite a remove from the supply of it. Healthy sermons have ancestors, antecedents. They are not made the week they are delivered. They are special drafts from fountains of living waters, which are fed from distant mountain springs. General preparation includes first, observation.

John La Farge, lecturing to students in the Metropolitan museum at New York, speaks thus: "I remember how a well-known oculist, who had little experience with painters, tested the sight of a patient who was an artist. He was surprised at the artist's avoiding the traps that are laid to detect defects in sight. Said the doctor, 'I have only two cases of eyes with worse defects than yours, but I have never

met any one who seemed to see so correctly.' 'That,' answered the artist, 'is my profession. My profession is to see correctly.' "

It is your profession, as well, to see correctly: to find sermons where the artist finds pictures, the novelist, romances, the poet, songs; not of necessity specific sermons, but real homiletic material.

Some one writing about the "Puritan in Art," says: "When I asked Mr. Broughton whether he contemplated painting any more Puritan pictures, he said, 'One does not contemplate subjects; they come to you fully armed, and you *have* to do them.' "

You can never tell when your observation is to prove your homiletic salvation, but that *it will* is assured.

Dr. R. F. Horton, upon a recent vacation, saw the sun rise. He watched the glorious procession of the monarch of the day, and then remarked, "If that vision does not make me a better man, it is my fault, not God's." That was a soul capture, in the early morning, far from his pulpit, but later the observation developed in one of his Lynhurst Road sermons really

made the sermon. School yourself to see; it is your profession.

Just here I desire to insert a plea for *early* travel for ministers. As part of your homiletic training, get in presence of new sights. *Travel*. I know you are poor. So are all ministers; so you will ever be; but *travel*. Get an early vision of some great world metropolis. Go to London! You can, if you will pay the fare. The price of a bicycle will take you there and back. Probably not in the first cabin. Well, there is a world to observe in the steerage. A vision of Westminster; a service in St. Paul's; a ride along the Strand on an omnibus; a meeting in St. James Park, where socialists, anarchists, nihilists, and every son of man who has a hobby to ride is in fine fettle, will be worth a whole year amid familiar scenes and native surroundings. But, wherever you are, train yourself to see beneath the surface.

The second characteristic of general preparation is reading.

John Wesley once said that a Christian had no more right to be a gentleman than a dancing master. He meant that a man's

religion was to be the preëminent thing about him. Your religion is the preëminent thing about you, and your sermon is the choice opportunity for you to deliver yourself. But you, yourself, are made by what you feed upon, and your reading is food.

Some plead for old books. There are only a dozen or two of men who have really influenced the world by contribution. The rest are imitators. Drink at the spring, they say. But there is always something musty about such a man's sermons. Some plead for one Book. Be men of one Book—the Bible.

A young friend of mine, fitting himself to be an evangelist, once said to me in my library, in the presence of the works of many master minds, ancient and modern, that he had determined to know only one book—his Bible. History, literature, magazines and newspapers were henceforth to be dismissed, and the blessed Bible was to become his meat day and night, in order that he might preach a pure and uncontaminated gospel. It is useless to argue with, much less to advise, such a soul,

and therefore I simply said, "If ever you feel the need of reading any other book besides the Bible, I would be glad to help you to a wise selection." He worked out his own blunder, and came back for the books. Experience is a great thing for a young preacher.

You are to preach to the people, and therefore you are to know a little about a great many things. The old adage, that it is better to know one thing well than to know a great many things partially, has decided limitations and exceptions. The minister who specializes his reading will be very likely to widen the gulf between his pulpit and the pews.

It is a good plan to keep half a dozen courses of reading on hand all the time. I am speaking now my own experience, and, therefore, make bold to illustrate from my own study. Just now on my table are three poets: Browning—he is always there; Kipling, with his billowy *Seven Seas*; Paul Dunbar, the first colored American poet, with his remarkable dialect songs. The novel is "*Quo Vadis*," the latest work of the Polish Sienkiewicz; the history is of

Poland; the biography is "Life of George Romanes"; the theology is, two volumes upon God, by Professor Harris of Yale, and "Moral Evolution," by Professor George Harris of Andover, which has passed to a third reading; the homiletic is Van Dyke's "Gospel for an Age of Doubt," and Mr. Nicoll's "When Worst Comes to Worst."

One reads and reads and reads in such companionship, and finds that he grows. You should devour some books—you will. You should detest others—you will. And both processes will have homiletic value. The truth is, there are different ways of reading. You read different things for different purposes, and the purpose covers the method. Some books you *skim*; some you *study*. In the one case, your quest is *illustration*; in the other, *ideas*. The first may be a novel; the second, a theology.

Current magazine literature is specially valuable. Take all the magazines you can, and borrow the reading of what you cannot personally afford. An illustration drawn from a common source has very great power over the people who have met it in its home. It gratifies them to feel that

they have noticed it themselves, and all the more that you, the minister, have noticed it, too. Do not be ashamed to be known as a great reader, or a rapid reader; it is an essential of your equipment. It makes a full man.

The training of the memory is a third characteristic of general preparation.

The advance of civilization has for its inevitable counterpart the retreat of capability. New abilities arise, to be sure, but old ones retire. Gladly do we confess gain, upon the whole, but sadly, too, we plead guilty to special and deplorable losses. Fingers grow less deft, for machinery works in place of them. The eye will never be more keen because spectacles do its work for it. No more will Hercules be found among men, or Atlas bearing a world upon his shoulders, because we have hydraulic lifts to do their ponderous feats.

The marvel of the Old World to a literary man is the extent to which the memory was trained. One longs to sit at one of those old banquets and hear some learned slave recite book after book of

ancient lore. The absence of the printing-press was a blessing to memory; the presence of it is the bane of memory. No man needs his memory more than a minister, and the young minister who wakes up to this truth and begins at twenty-five to train and develop his memory, will bless the day he began, a score of years hence.

Jonathan Edwards began early, and used to pin a bit of paper on his coat as he walked, to represent every idea which he would detain, to be put in irons later, and sometimes when he came home his coat would be white with the pickets of his ideas.

Thoughts, worthy, suggestive, and vital, are frequently compacted into a sentence. Hold the sentence, and you hold the thought. The man who has in his mind a company of thought-laden sentences, will never cherish that idle brain which in ministers, as in others, is the devil's workshop.

Poetry enshrines the very noblest of human conceptions. To commit poetry to memory is never a waste of time. For a minister, there is hardly a more compen-

sating occupation. The temptation of reading is to allow it to become a luxury rather than a labor, an affair of comfort rather than of conscience. It may be tantalizing to stop in the midst of an exciting passage to capture a luminous idea set in a unique phrase or fine sentence, but the promise you make, as you hasten on, that you will return later to the jewel, is almost never fulfilled, and a distinct loss to your mental integrity, as well as equipment, is the result. The conscientious training of the memory, the making your own, with whatever labor, the best things others have said and written, is one of the *open secrets* of a good sermonizer.

Meditation is first assistant to the memory.

Charles Darwin was accustomed to greet his favorite pupil, George John Romanes, with outstretched hand, a bright smile, and the quiet exclamation, "How glad I am that you are so young!" And then the great scientist would seriously advise his young friend, "Above all, Romanes, cultivate the habit of meditation."

Introduction to a new idea, flashing in a novel, glistening in a poem, or embedded

deep in a theological volume, is a critical moment for you. The idea will never come again as it does now. It has at this moment attendants; it is escorted by a brilliant pageant of retainers; it suggests a whole fraternity of allied conceptions. If you excuse yourself from further companionship with this idea on account of pressing engagements, and in your selfish rudeness hasten on with your story, your monograph, your poem, when at your lordly convenience you come back, the idea has excused itself from you, and you will have to confess, as somebody does about departed youth,—

“Something beautiful has vanished,
And we search for it in vain;
We behold it everywhere—
On the earth and in the air,
But it never comes again.”

The ghost of a snubbed idea will haunt a minister's mind, sting his conscience, and generally disturb his peace in a way absolutely unique among all the weird caprices of these shadowy forms. An idea hospitably entertained, memorized, meditated upon,

will become a contribution to one's mental capital, which will pay compound interest, and which will never pass a dividend.

I remember to have heard Dr. Lyman Abbott say that his literary habit was to read a little, and then think about what he had read. You must hold yourself under strict discipline if you would be a profitable reader. A traveler may cover many miles in a day, but when he arrives at a city, he must tarry long enough to get into the life of the place, if he is to appreciate it or it is to influence him. The secret of good reading is knowing when you are in *the city*, and compelling yourself to stay there till the city gets into you.

Note books are second assistants to the memory. Jewett, master of Balliol, could not too strongly urge his students to keep commonplace-books, citing his own habit as illustration, while this advice from Charles Kingsley, reveals the source of the versatility of his own style:—

“Keep a commonplace-book, and put into it not only facts and thoughts, but observations on form and color and nature, and little sketches, even to the form of beautiful leaves.

They will all have their charm, all do their work in consolidating your ideas. Put everything into it. Strive to put every idea into a tangible form, and write it down."

This is a practical way of keeping your memory in line.

I was in a minister's study not long since, in which was a great letter case arranged for "clippings." He always reads with a blue pencil; his stenographer clips and files. That is one way of preserving material. This minister's sermons always betray his method—*scrappy*.

An elaborate system of *note taking* is unprofitable, but certain notes are essential. Have a note-book, a fountain pen, a bottle of mucilage, and a pair of scissors always at hand. Read with your note-book at hand. Put into it everything which has homiletic value, with your comment. Read it over frequently. It will be invaluable. Old Captain Cuttle had a monstrous truth alongside when he gave the order—"When found make a note of."

The special preparation of the sermon must now engage our attention.

Whatever may be said to you upon this

subject must be of general, rather than of minute, suggestion. The inevitable fact is, that next Sunday comes not only promptly, but always with the unexpected celerity of those things that travel in seven-league boots. And with the coming Sunday, the work must be accomplished. Some toil specifically at the sermons all the week. They get the text Monday; write introduction Tuesday; first point, Wednesday; second, Thursday; third, Friday; revise, Saturday; and trust in the Lord for what they are to say at the second service Sunday, and find that in the hands of the aforesaid trusted Lord they are "reeds shaken by the wind." Others wait till Saturday, and burn the midnight oil. Occasionally, one like Beecher does his specific work Sunday morning. To every man according to his several ability. Some work with great rapidity, others plod. No rule can be laid down for the special preparation of a sermon, but every man must bear his own burden. There is, however, this which is absolute. No tyranny is so cruel as that of a dissipated homiletic habit. No slave ever drudges in utter loyalty for

its master like the homiletic habit when once it has been thoroughly mastered.

It is said of Dr. F. L. Patton, the brilliant president of Princeton and the incisive preacher, that he will plan a sermon on the back of an envelope on his way to its delivery. It is conceivable. He is a professor of ethics and philosophy, a Bible student, a great leader. Once let his mind accept a theme, and from every direction his thoughts and illustrations come flocking like doves to their windows. But President Patton and Beecher are the experts, not the beginners. They illustrate, however, the essential thing for you to acquire, namely, the *mastery* of the *homiletic habit*. If the habit masters you, alas for you! If you master it, your joy in preaching is assured.

A good reader and observer will always have plenty of themes. The difficulty of selection from a good stock of subjects is, on the whole, more to be desired than that of a forced three days' journey into the wilderness each week in search of one.

One of the brightest of our young Massachusetts preachers, speaking of his ser-

mons, said, "I always have a number of themes in my mind. When I want a sermon, I stick my homiletic fork into them as a cook does into boiling potatoes to see if they are done. I choose the one nearest cooked, give it special fire, and use it Sunday."

The theme in mind, it is a valuable exercise to read its opposite. If you are to preach on love, read about hate; if about the spring and flowers—don't do it too often,—read about winter and roots; if about hope, get the literature of despair. Your mind will fly for refuge to the opposite pole, and there you frequently will catch your sermon in hiding. It is safe to wait for the plan to come and lay its sword at your feet, like a knight before the fair lady, if you are really engaged in mastering your theme. Plans are like—

"The snowflake on the river,
A moment seen, then gone forever."

Woe to the man who has to go in search of pen and note-book when a plan sends its light athwart his dark pathway! He will find it darker than before, when

he comes to attempt the capture of the eluded vision. Write down every plan, good, bad, indifferent, which comes to you, when it comes. Write out in full all illustrations suggested. Write page after page of ideas with the freedom and abandon of a pen driven by a time limit. Do not fear if the week hastens to its closing; you are getting ready. The plan will come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the elaborated ideas and illustrations will fall into line as regularly and as surprisingly as a company of well-drilled soldiers when the call "To arms!" summons them from their slumber.

One of the luxuries of a faithful minister's homiletic experiences is that at eventide, when it is light, an hour's work sets in order a week's labor. The sense of mastery is most refreshing.

The question of the preaching of the prepared sermon is one which will be answered largely by a man's own habit. The exact writer is quite liable to scorn the exclamatory speaker; and the man whose flowing speech can sway an audience is not always sure that there is room

in the world for the quiet speech and elegant diction of the disciple of the manuscript.

The pastor of one of our great churches traveled for his health, not long since, across the sea. His physician would not allow him to preach, so he was obliged to attend church and listen to his brethren. On his return to his own country, he made the startling announcement that the only effective sermons he heard were from manuscript; that the extemporaneous or spoken sermons were all sonorous, on the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal order, and he drew the conclusion that the written sermon is the only proper method of pulpit address. Now the fact is, that this minister preaches, himself, a strong, able, written sermon; but his own extemporaneous utterances are as dreary as the monotonous tinkle of a bell-buoy in the fog. He wishes he could, but he cannot, deliver with effect a spoken sermon, and because he cannot, it is, of course, a serious question whether it is not a reflection on himself to admit that anybody can or does. There is just a suggestion of prejudice in his opinion.

It will be conceded, I think, that the spoken sermon for the average audience is the great present demand. Times are too rushing; the defiance of the gospel too spiteful; the crying need of the world too piteous, to allow the calm, deliberate, unimpassioned utterance of truth to carry men over to highest resolutions and noblest endeavors. A great occasion in public life, a threatening war, an overshadowing calamity, always stirs the extemporaneous habit. Heat expands; it is difficult to confine it within walls of iron. It is a distinct advantage to have one's whole self to bestow upon an audience, and however a man may boast—and every man does—that he is not hampered by his notes, still the care of his manuscript is a subtraction from himself, and, in so far, from his efficiency. Because the spoken sermon is the sermon at its best, every student should strive for it. The great majority can become effective extemporaneous preachers, if willing to make a sufficiently strenuous effort.

Darwin once encouraged Romanes in a certain grafting failure, by saying, "Trol-

lope, in one of his novels, gives us a maxim of constant use by a brickmaker. 'It is *dogged* as does it,' and I have often thought this is the motto for every scientific worker." Yea, verily, and for every homiletical worker, too. "It is *dogged* as does it," young gentlemen; not facility, not natural gifts; these are usually barriers to an effective extemporaneous habit. Relying on these, you substitute for a sermon merely an utterance.

Said a presiding elder to me about a young preacher in whom we were both interested, "Young men are so foolish!" Our friend was appointed to preach at camp-meeting. It was an honor, as well as a responsibility. He worked hard upon his sermon, but when it came time to preach, judge my surprise to hear him say that as he had been sitting under the green trees that day, the Lord had given him a different message from that he had prepared. Thereupon he announced that holy text: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "For two minutes," said the grim elder, with a smile, "all was well, but for the

other twenty-eight he said nothing, but roared 'like a pelican in the wilderness.' "

"Roaring like a pelican in the wilderness" is not extemporaneous preaching. It is too easy, too frothy, too purely animal for that. The spoken sermon, at its best, is the evolved sermon. It comes up through the written and the memorized. It is based upon these. It is a triumph of habit, a goal of long-planned and long-prosecuted endeavor. There is no escape from careful writing and painstaking elaboration for any man who would by any method preach his noblest.

The memorized sermon is a step in advance of the written sermon. It is the written sermon delivered through the memory rather than through the eye. It need not be an exercise in elocution or resemble the performance of a public reader: it can be natural, effective, and almost spontaneous.

The memorizing method will quicken the eagerness for the spoken method. It is a sort of look into the promised land. It is the second step toward the spoken sermon. To attempt it, you will need as much

heroism as a general must summon who goes a-wooing.

How at this moment my own experience comes back! I was preaching in a small fishing village on the back side of Cape Cod. The church was upon the beach, and the pounding of the great, white-capped billows on the shore punctuated for me my discourse in the morning, for I could distinctly hear them. A storm arose, and in preparing for the second service I was challenged with the idea of leaving my manuscript and preaching the sermon from memory. I was very familiar with the sermon. I only had two, and every theologian is thoroughly acquainted with the "first-born" among his homiletic progeny. I thought the waves would help me out if I broke down. I resolved to try. It was, soberly, a *great* resolution.

The audience was small. The text was announced, and never did the whistling winds of the old Atlantic chase each other with greater celerity across those sandy wastes than did my swift-footed words in their half-terrified and half-exhilarated scramble for the end of the discourse. I trip-

ped, but eagerly pressed on! Once I tumbled down, but not waiting even to brush the dirt off, or pity myself because I had been bumped, I pressed on, and finished. It was hard on the audience. Not many complimented the effort, but it was my great sermon. It revealed to me a new and powerful approach to men. I followed the method till I could preach with composure out of my memory. This method is excellent discipline for the mind, and is usually acceptable to the people.

The spoken sermon is a great consumer of homiletic material. You cannot economize. You must be lavish, even prodigal. Your hearers must be delivered from the idea either that you are walking in slippery places, or that you are skirting the borderland of your mental preserves. They must be impressed with the idea that there is behind your utterance a great reserve, and respect for your reserve is cultivated by your generous packing of every sermon with virile but versatile thought and apt illustration. The aspirant for the extemporaneous ability must be, beyond others, a wide observer, an omnivorous reader, and a

constant thinker, otherwise he will preach in a small circle, illustrate every sin by drunkenness, every virtue by charity, and begin his home-made illustrations with "When I was in Europe," or words to that effect. Will Carleton's "Traveled Parson" illustrates the *good* small preacher:

"And the way he went for Europe! oh, the way
he scampered through it!

Not a mountain but he clim' it—not a city but he
knew it;

There wasn't any subject to explain, in all crea-
tion,

But he could go to Europe and bring back an
illustration!

So we crowded out to hear him, quite instructed
and delighted;

'T was a picture show, a lecture, and a sermon—
all united;

And my wife would rub her glasses, and serenely
pet her Test'ment,

And whisper, 'That 'ere ticket was a splendid
good investment.'

Now after six months' travel, we was most of us
all ready

To settle down a little, so's to live more staid
and steady;

To develop home resources, with no foreign cares
to fret us,

Using home-made faith more frequent; but our
parson wouldn't let us!
To view the same old scenery, time and time
again he'd call us—
Over rivers, plains, and mountains he would any
minute haul us;
He slighted our soul sorrows, and our spirits'
aches and ailings,
To get the cargo ready for his regular Sunday
sailings!
Why, he'd take us off a-touring, in all spiritual
weather,
Till we at last got homesick and seasick all
together!
And 'I wish to all that's peaceful,' said one
free-expressioned brother,
'That the Lord had made one cont'nent, an'
then never made another!'

Sometimes, indeed, he'd take us into old, famil-
iar places,
And pull along quite nat'ral, in the good old
Gospel traces;
But soon my wife would shudder, just as if a
chill had got her,
Whispering, 'Oh, my goodness gracious! he's
a-takin' to the water!'"

Further quotation is unnecessary, but the
traveled parson is a warning to every stu-
dent to have more than one ability.

Goethe's pet compliment was that he was a man of panoramic ability.

The three great characteristics of a spoken sermon are point, picture, and passion. One is to have some distinct thing to say; one is to picture his thought; one is to glow in saying it. The analysis must be clean, the points in as few words as possible. The illustration must be apt. Some decry illustration as taking the place of thought. Illustration is thought. One good illustration will provoke more thought than a dozen finely-spun and intricately-woven sentences. The story-teller in the pulpit is a pigmy, but the illustrator is a giant. Whitefield is a fine example. He could describe a storm and a shipwrecked crew with such vivid reality that when in the critical moment he exclaimed, "What next?" an auditor could not help exclaiming, "For God's sake, man the life-boat!"

Benjamin Franklin knew Whitefield well, and tells a story of going to hear him preach for his orphanage in Georgia, with which Mr. Franklin had no sympathy. "I silently resolved," says Franklin, "that he should get nothing from me. I had in my

pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all." Descriptive preaching which can empty pockets like that is despised by any minister at his peril.

The spoken sermon presents the opportunity of expressing *passion*. This is the great lack in the modern pulpit. A wholesome respect for proprieties has become impudently monarchical, and relegated passion to the Methodists and the Salvation Army. The result is, the Methodists are eagerly sought for Congregational pulpits, and the Salvation Army has, as it should, a cordial welcome at our Congregational hearthstones. Do not, I beg of you, young men, do not be afraid to wear your heart on your sleeve. A tear is not unmanly—if it is a manly tear. If every Congregational minister were unable to preach next Sunday without weeping, there would be

a transformation in the congregations which would be astonishing. Throw your whole self into your sermon. Preach, not in the old phrase as a “dying man to dying men,” but, as a “living man to living men.” Get beneath the sense of the supreme splendor of your privilege. Bushnell said,—“No other calling would permit me sufficiently to be.”

There are multitudes of sermons like that which Elspeth Macfadyen heard “Maister Popinjay” preach,—Mr. Popinjay, “as neat an’ fikey a little mannie as ever a’ saw in a black goon. His bit sermon wes six poems—five a’ hed heard afore—four anecdotes—three aboot himsel’ and ain aboot a lord—twa burnies, ae floo’r gairden, and a snowstorm, wi’ the text thirteen times, and ‘beloved’ twal.”

Ah, this is a different thing from the impassioned utterance which fell from the lips of the young preacher of Drumtochty when he delivered his first sermon—his mother’s sermon. His mother, in the lingering moments before entrance into the city which hath no need of the sun, had said to her boy, “If God calls ye to the ministry, ye’ll no refuse, an’ the first day ye

preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ, an', John, I'll hear ye that day, though ye 'ill no see me, and I'll be satisfied."

Years passed, education was finished, the call accepted, and the preparation for the first sermon had been completed. "He had finished its last page with honest pride that afternoon, and had declaimed it, facing the southern window, with a success that amazed himself. His hope was that he might be kept humble, and not called to Edinburgh for at least two years; and now he lifted the sheets with fear. The brilliant opening, with its historical parallel, this review of modern thought reinforced by telling quotations, that trenchant criticism of old-fashioned views, would not deliver."

His audience had vanished, and in its place was one sweet face, and "then in the stillness of the room he heard a voice, 'Speak a gude word for Jesus Christ.' Next minute he was kneeling on the hearth, and pressing the *magnum opus*, that was to shake Drumtochty, into the heart of the red fire, and he saw, half smiling and half

weeping, the impressive words, 'Semitic environment' shrivel up and disappear. As the last black flake fluttered out of sight, the face looked at him again, but this time the sweet, brown eyes were full of peace."

Next day John went to his pulpit resplendent in gown and band, without his notes to be sure, but with his heart. His "gude word for Jesus" found the hearts of his hearers. Donald Menzies said, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."

Genuine, heartfelt, hot-souled, "gude words for Jesus Christ" are not only the great urgency, but the rewarding satisfactions of our modern pulpit. Great souls are won, not by argument, but by sincerity.

Recall the noble fancy through which a great English poet has taught this truth. It is Christmas Eve, and out from a little nonconformist chapel pompously strides a man whose sensibilities have been outraged by the plebeian crowd, the coarse worship, the illiterate discourse. Congratulating himself that he is not as other men are, and

that Nature is his church, he suddenly beholds a vision of Christ, but from him the Master's face is turned, because he has despised Christ's friends. Eagerly does he pray for pardon, when, enfolded in the garments of the Lord, he is transported to St. Peter's at Rome, where the majestic service is being conducted in presence of a great multitude. He sees the formalism, the ritual, the error, but underneath it all he cannot be blind to the love which here finds an imperfect expression. Again he is transported to the lecture-room of a German professor where the "Christ myth" is being analyzed, and where the "pearl of great price" is being pulverized to dust and ashes, but where as a last word the professor bids his students "venerate the myth," and here again he cannot fail to see a glimmer of love. Back now to the chapel, and all that seemed so crude, so revolting, is clothed in the radiant garments of a new light. The old defects exist—a new spirit transforms them.

"First, the preacher speaks through his nose:

Second, his gestures are too emphatic:

Thirdly, to waive what's pedagogic,
The subject matter itself lacks logic.
Fourthly, the English is ungrammatic.

* * * * *

"Great news! the sermon proves no reading
Where bee-like in the flowers I bury me
Like Taylor's, the immortal Jeremy!
And now that I know the very worst of him,
What was it I thought to obtain at first of
him?

* * * * *

"It were to be wished the flaws were fewer
In the earthen vessel, holding treasure
Which lies as safe in a golden ewer;
But the main thing is, does it hold good
measure?
Heaven soon sets right all other matters!"

The result of it all is, that in spite of the plain house, peasant congregation, illogical preaching, since *love* is here, our pompous friend, humbled and enlightened by Christ's evidence of love, himself joins the humble company and becomes an admiring parishioner of the illiterate, but intense and genuine, dominie.

"I put up pencil and join chorus
To Hepsibah tune, without further apology,

The last five verses of the third section
Of the seventeenth hymn of Whitefield's Col-
lection,

To conclude with the doxology."

The real sermon thus is truth kindled by the hot fires of an earnest purpose and a sincere heart. That man will preach who will deliver himself in God's stead; others will but parley.

Young gentlemen, with all my soul I congratulate you that you are entering the ministry *to-day*. It is a wonderful time to be alive. Bring the abandon, the enthusiasm, the heart of your young lives with you. Cultivate passion, restrained, controlled, but *burning, flaming passion*. It will give you your approach to men; it will undergird your preaching, for preaching is not alone making men think; it is making them feel in proportion as they think.

Archbishop Sutton is said to have given Bishop Heber, on his consecration to the See of Calcutta, this charge: "Place before your eyes two precepts, and two only. One is, Preach the Gospel; the other is, Put down enthusiasm!" Herein, like the call of

Mohammed's prophet to prayer, is a great truth yoked to a great lie. Let us have the whole truth! Place before your eyes two purposes: Preach the Gospel; punctuate your preaching with enthusiasm.



III

THE REAL AUDIENCE



THE REAL AUDIENCE

Some years ago, when the perennial question of the evening worship was agitating the minds of many ministers who were discouraged by the meager attendance upon the second service, one of our most scholarly, eloquent, and spiritual leaders, whose church, crowded in the morning to the doors, had in the chapel in the evening but here and there a traveler, wrote an article to the effect that the real question about any service is not, What is there? but, Who is there?

A young brother, who was reveling at the time in a full congregation at the second service, but who has had his experience since in ministering to vacant pews at eventide, in his conceit regarded the above statement as an apology for ill success, as a clever hiding place from the

storm. But gradually the suggestive truth has risen upon him, and he understands that the *what* of an assembly is insignificant when compared with the *who* of it.

Your congregation consists of what is there, the mere numerical total; your audience of *who* is there, the roster of spiritual or soul presence.

We are so infatuated with modern book-keeping that the usher's tally will elevate or depress our spirits as it grows or shrinks. The size of the congregation lords it over the spirit of the audience.

Some time, when the present ebbing spiritual tide flows again, the real estimate of assemblies will obtain even among church officers. The tally will be ordered to the rear; the spirit will again take the field. You see your congregation; your audience sees you. You dismiss your congregation, but your audience cannot be divorced from you.

When "heart leaps forth to wed with heart ere thought can wed itself with speech;" when spirits fellowship, time stops the clock and eternity begins. The congregation thus is the transient; the audi-

ence, the everlasting. You change your parish; your congregation becomes the concern of your successor, but your audience is still your own. Neither shall any man pluck it out of your hands. The actor is seeking a congregation; without it, he quits the stage. The minister yearns for an audience; once let him secure it, and he has fulfilled his ministry. The woman of Samaria was, as a congregation, small, but as an audience, of more value than all the scribes and Pharisees Christ ever addressed.

Francis Xavier, born of lordly and noble but impoverished parents, early developed special literary ability, so that his father, in the amplitude of a generous heart, "strained his slender resources" to send the promising son to the University of Paris. Nor were the fond parent's expectations quenched, for the brilliant son in time became a lecturer upon the Aristotelian philosophy, and gathered about him a large company of rich and noble students, admiring his genius and hanging upon his words. One day he spied among the company of the great and gay, a stern-

visaged, sordidly-clad individual, whose continued presence furnished the occasion of many a witty sally and contemptuous sarcasm. But Ignatius Loyola could not thus be driven from Xavier's lecture-room. The students were Xavier's congregation; Loyola alone was his audience. Loyola saw Xavier's soul. Beneath all the academic rubbish it glistened like a diamond. Xavier's words gripped Loyola's spirit with hooks of steel. The spiritual affinity could not be dissolved by Xavier's impatient, impudent and insulting manner and address. Loyola followed him everywhere,—to his lectures, to his lodging,—and always concluded every interview with the pointed query: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The congregation after a while deserted Xavier; the audience remained. When Xavier, in despair, abandoned himself and followed evil courses, Loyola was close to him, meeting his necessities with the patience of a great confidence, and always accompanying his ministry with his searching question.

At last the tables turn. The lecturer

becomes audience; the audience becomes lecturer. Xavier becomes a disciple of Loyola, and by his sacrificial fidelity, one of the most immortal of the missionaries of the cross. What a distance, by spiritual measure, from the frozen sarcasm of the academic lecture-room, to the impassioned utterance of the dying saint, raising himself on his crucifix from the cold sands by the waters of a foreign sea, and exclaiming, his face "irradiated as with the first beams of approaching glory,"—"In te, Domine, speravi—non confundar in æternum."

The illustration incidentally reveals the very inspiring truth of the reciprocal influence of the audience upon the speaker, but its primary mission is to emphasize our fundamental contention that the important question concerning any assemblage is not *what*, but *who*, is there. The congregation hears the speech; the audience listens to the spirit. The congregation will forget your words—

"They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day."

The audience will remember your meaning,

and will not only remember but will re-incarnate it in themselves.

The great desideratum of a preacher is not a congregation, but an audience. A growing audience is not incompatible with a diminishing congregation. Nor is a diminishing congregation, thank God, an inevitable attendant of a growing audience!

It takes, then, a real man to discover an audience and develop a congregation, for, as Mrs. Browning so pithily remarks,—

“It takes a soul
To move a body; it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses,—even to a cleaner sty;
It takes the ideal to blow a hair’s breadth off
The dust of the actual.”

This audience of which I have been speaking, which is an open soul into which you pour spiritual nectar which has been distilled in your own, is not always in evidence. You do not recognize it at the time it listens to you. You will never appreciate its full importance, and will only catch glimpses of its presence now and then, when some disturbance of sorrow or sickness in others’ lives, or some change

in your own plan or parish calls it in grateful acknowledgment from its hiding.

Dr. Dale, in a lecture about the congregation helping the minister, relates the following :

There are times when the most buoyant sink into despondency, when a gray, chilly mist creeps over the soul of those who have the largest happiness in the service of God, and when they feel as if all their strength was gone. Not very long ago, if I may venture once more to speak about myself, one of these evil moods was upon me; but as I was passing along one of the streets of Birmingham, a poor but decently-dressed woman, laden with parcels, stopped me, and said, "God bless you, Dr. Dale!" Her face was unknown to me. I said, "Thank you, but what is your name?" "Never mind my name," she answered, "but if you could only know how you have made me feel hundreds of times, and what a happy home you have given me! God bless you!" The mist broke; the sunlight came. I breathed the free air of the mountains of God.

A minister, having changed his parish, was passing through the city in which his former church was located, when a hackman stopped and, touching his hat, said,

"Glad to see you back, Doctor. I used often to hear you preach in your church, and it's mighty sorry a lot of us are to have you gone!"

These doctors of divinity were greatly cheered by such evidences of an audience of the existence of which they had been in entire ignorance. The unknown quantity is no inconsiderable factor in a minister's audience, and he can generate a world of inspiration and of comfort for his desponding soul if he will but challenge it with its certain but unnamed listeners, whom his eye hath not seen.

Besides these precious audiences which are not in evidence, but which are nevertheless real and actual, there are the *occasional* audiences, which demand a passing word.

The occasional audience is the minister's opportunity of sending his spirit, in an unusual manner, upon its usual quest. He still has his chance to preach, in making an after-dinner speech, delivering an oration, or expressing the public conscience on some common platform. Not infrequently, the passion of his spirit kindles other life,

when his utterance is at a long remove from his pulpit. The faculty of spiritual adjustment to an unusual situation is the secret of many a minister's power over men.

The Jesuits in North America, whose startling and brilliant spiritual accomplishments Parkman has chronicled in faultless diction, possessed in an unusual degree this adjusting faculty, and knew the value of the occasional. A paper of instructions prepared at Paris for their guidance among the Hurons, is replete with sagacious suggestion. "You should love the Indians like brothers, with whom you are to spend the rest of your life. Never make them wait for your embarking. Take a flint and steel to light their pipes and kindle their fire at night, for these little services win their hearts. Do not make yourself troublesome to a single Indian. Bear their faults in silence, and appear always cheerful. Be not ceremonious with the Indians; take at once what they offer you; ceremony offends them. Be very careful when in the canoe that the brim of your hat does not annoy them. Perhaps it would be better to wear your nightcap.

LsfC.

There is no such thing as impropriety among Indians. Remember that it is Christ and His cross that you are seeking; and if you aim at anything else, you will get nothing but affliction for body and mind."

This estimate of the occasional at its real value, this strenuous sacrificial effort to appropriate it, is well worthy the spiritual meditation of those of us who are holding up the banner of the cross on the territory where these missionaries raised it.

Beecher, pleading the American cause before English audiences, tinctured, to say the least, with Confederate sympathies, is, though far from his pulpit, yet preaching mightily. Hugh Price Hughes, passionately demanding the abolition of unsanitary dwellings, though grieving exceedingly a dull saint who mourned that he lost so fair an opportunity to "preach the gospel," is yet a minister of Christ. Perhaps F. W. Robertson is, of all preachers of our time, the man who esteemed the occasional audience. He was more than once challenged for his unclerical tendencies, but his constant reply was a new approach to the workingmen from their own side. Once a lady reminded

him of his heresies, and of their present and future consequences. "I do n't care," was his calm reply. "Do you know, sir," said she, "what do n't care came to?" "Yes, madam," was the grave reply, "He was crucified on Calvary." Still he went on speaking for, planning with, the workingmen, defending their rights, boldly challenging their false positions, putting his rich spirit at their service, and dying in their love.

A young minister may well learn by heart the closing words of his biography: "There were united around his tomb, by a common sorrow and common love, Jews, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Quakers, and Churchmen; the workingmen, the tradesmen, and the rank and wealth of Brighton; for once all classes and all sects merged their differences in one deep feeling. They have raised above him a simple and massive monument. On two of its sides there are bronze medallions,—one given by his congregation, the other by the workingmen of Brighton. They record in touching words the gratitude of thousands. The thoughtful affection of the workingmen has entrusted to a committee of four the task of keeping, even in win-

ter, flowers blooming on his grave. They speak to many who make their pilgrimage to the spot, of the fair immortality which is given to the faithful soldier of Jesus Christ."

The demands of public address are mightily increasing. The minister is wanted upon social, literary, patriotic occasions, to voice the sentiment or the duty of the hour. He may not with propriety make in every address a specific plea for immediate repentance. It is not proper on every occasion to conduct a revival service. But he can make his spirit disclose his heart without in the least violating the proprieties of the occasion. You have no business in, and no time for, any gathering in which your real spirit must wear a mask, but you can speak with other tongues as the spirit gives you utterance.

The Algonquin convert gave the Jesuit Joques the suggestive advice, "Say nothing about the faith at first, for there is nothing so repulsive in the beginning as our doctrine, which seems to destroy everything that men hold dear; and, as your long cassock preaches as well as your lips, you had better put on a short coat." He did; but he

was preaching all the time. The value of an occasional audience is the opportunity it furnishes of expressing your spirit, not in a "long cassock," but in "a short coat."

But let us now turn from the precious audience, unseen, and the occasional audience, to the usual audience, the congregation, the flock.

Phillips Brooks makes the keen remark, "There is something remarkable in the way in which a minister talks about 'my congregation.' They evidently come to seem to him different from the rest of human kind. There is the rest of our race, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the islands of the sea, and then there is 'my congregation!'"

"My congregation!" How smoothly and with what complacent satisfaction the words roll from the new-fledged minister's grateful lips! His parish he verily believes to be a quarter section of Paradise; his people, of the essential spirit of the angels about the great white throne. When the disillusion comes, and the parish unmask, what he thought was to be Paradise turns out to be at least a suggestion of purgatory, and some

of his angels are found to be under contract to the arch fiend himself!

Paul Leicester Ford wrote some years ago a book entitled "The True George Washington." The idealized, fictitious, impossible Washington had so possessed the public mind that it was necessary in order to save this great character from passing into legend that his actual life should be recalled. The ideal sometimes paints and powders the real till it is unrecognizable, and when the paint is gone and the powder can no longer cover the deception, there is a shock which is indeed terrible.

Many a minister has parted the cable of his hope and trust, when by the swinging tides of actual experience his boat has shifted position and given him a vision of the principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, ensconced in that parish, which to his imagination was a sample of the new Jerusalem.

Your congregation, then, understand it at the outset, is composed of men of like passions as your own. They are real flesh and blood; they can bite and snarl, as well as bless and sympathize; they are

capable of meanest tricks, as of most generous consideration; they can be bigoted as well as broad; they can surprise you by their lack of, as by their loyalty to, Christian principle. It is yours to expect revelations; you will surely have them. It is yours to cling in any event to your faith.

“Trust God. See all, nor be afraid.”

In your congregation will be found the sin-smitten soul. Even “the devil goes to church.” Daniel Defoe sung,—

“Wherever God erects a house of prayer
The devil always builds a chapel there,
And ’twill be found upon examination
The latter has the largest congregation.”

That is a specimen of the miserable dualism which has always tricked men’s thoughts. The devil’s chapel, so far as he has any, is the church; and when he “worships,” he takes his seat in the house of God. When the devil quits going to church, the millennium will have dawned, and with the dawning the minister’s distinctive occupation will have vanished. It is your business to flash the resplendent light of your

faith into the revolting darkness of his folly; to pierce with the gleaming spear of your holy aspiration the pale form of his groveling spirit. His presence is your opportunity. Whether he sits fashionably attired in empty pride and lordly selfishness in the body pew, or, clad in the tawdry garments of Pharisaic self-righteousness, officiates as deacon and sits on the side aisle; whether he comes driving with loose rein the mettlesome passions of youth, or curbing with restraining calculation the shriveling generousities and the small exactions of on-creeping age; whether subtly or openly he reveals himself, he has a right in your church, and to a taste of the living water you freely furnish.

There is a disposition to restrict the privileges of God's house to a certain class of the iniquitous and to deny those privileges to a certain other class. As an example of denial, take the liquor seller. A temperance sentiment with more strength than spirituality would hound him out of God's house and warn a young minister against any contact with so open a violator of God's law. Some ministers, if they see such a man in the congregation, immediately

begin a fusilade of personal pyrotechnics, which light his path from the church, to be sure, but do not illumine his sin, or in any way reveal to him its awful character in God's sight. Now, any minister is a coward who waters his truth because somebody in the congregation cannot bear it full strength. Some sermons are like the stock of the Nicaragua Canal, of which it has been said that if the water could be extracted from it there would be enough to float the navies of the world. Now while truth is to be bravely and completely spoken, at the same time there is a proportion of truth, a discretion of truth, a stating of truth, as well as a broadside of truth. I wish every liquor dealer went to church twice on Sunday. I detest, loathe, and abhor his business, but the only chance of winning him from it is to get him beneath the power of the truth, of which you and I are supposed to be flaming exponents. Christ came to call sinners to repentance. When the sinner comes to your church, remember that you are Christ's representative, and when you are tempted vigorously to use the flail, remember that your Master, always brave and unflinch-

ing, could yet by the spirit that was in him hold his influence, even while dining with publicans and sinners.

The leaders of our "best society" go to church. They sit in the broad aisle. They sometimes greatly desire to regulate, if not to control, the utterances of the preacher. Too often, by their long pocketbooks, they have made themselves apparently indispensable to the financial prosperity of the church, and a weak spirit of sycophancy on the part of the church renders to these Cæsars the things that are God's. The minister is expected to observe the proprieties, as do their other dependents, or he may expect their small revenge of a thrust at his living by giving up their pew.

If their son is a prodigal, the minister must carefully avoid reference to fast young men. If their real estate is leased for unrighteous purposes, a sermon upon landlords is distinctly out of order. If their income is not altogether clean and wholesome, it will be well for the preacher to "guard his utterances" concerning false balances and kindred themes.

Mr. and Mrs. Bulson, whom Dr. Parker

found in "Might Have Been," whose income was large, piety small, and spirit exacting; whose pew was No. 13; who urged the minister to preach practical and pointed sermons, assuring him of their loyal support, have sailed to America, and are found in every congregation,—that is, until the minister preaches the sermon, and then cometh the end. It came with the English parson. He cleared his conscience by preaching the sermon, and "before the following Sunday pew No. 13 was cleared of cushions and hassocks."

Young Timothy is greatly perplexed by Mr. and Mrs. Bulson of pew No. 13. To retain the courage of his convictions in their august presence; to remember that he is not the minister of Mr. and Mrs. Bulson, but of Jesus Christ; to carry himself in loyalty to his commission, and at the same time in generous sympathy with, and courteous independence of, his congregation; to be great enough to fail apparently, while succeeding really, this is the emergency which sends a minister to his knees in importunate prayer that he may at once walk softly and have the stride

of a Colossus; may be tactful, but abidingly true; always adorning, never adulterating, his profession. Mr. and Mrs. Bulson, however, represent nobody but themselves. They are not in a position, with all their influence, to overthrow the genuine gospel. Remember that, and act accordingly.

The inquirer goes to church. He comes from the sway of other influences from those to which you have been accustomed. He is wakened to earnest questioning by your words. He wants to be your audience. He lays his misgivings, his doubts, before you. Let us suppose him very heretical doctrinally. Science has overturned his faith. You shudder as he reveals the long list of his disbeliefs. He is a great opportunity to you. If you meet him as a real man should, you may guide him safely through his Sahara. If you are unmanly, autocratic, small, you may spoil a rare spirit. The soul which is wide-awake enough to ask questions and to think for itself, and protestant enough to decline to take its great truths upon authority alone, is a soul on which no time

spent in suggestion or sympathy is wasted. *Doubt* need not be noxious. Some plants bloom only in the dark; but you will sit till the small hours to feast your eyes on the radiant beauty of the night-blooming cereus.

“You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

“I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

“Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

“He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

“To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

“But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai’s peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Although the trumpet blew so loud.”

When a minister once confessed his doubts to Kingsley, the reply of that transparent spirit was this: “All I can say is, this may be the most fruitful and precious of your life experiences!” That was no word of compliment. It was desperate appeal. It was a strong hand reached out to a soul in the swirling currents of melancholy despair. It saved that soul.

God sometimes subtracts a man’s pretended beliefs in order to restore real ones to him. Many a soul is sentenced to work out its own salvation. It does not believe; it only believes that it believes; and that that one belief may pass through its spirit and vitalize its real life, a benign Providence permits the cyclone of denial to cut its jagged trail through cherished formulas and boasted faiths. But after the whirlwind, the still, small voice! This was Robertson’s experience, and the numbers are legion who have found the jewel of their faith in the debris of their beliefs. The

doubter who still hovers about the church and will open his perplexities to a minister's appreciative, sympathetic, but at the same time trenchant, treatment, is, indeed, a choice parishioner because of the opportunity he presents. He is to be met not as an alien, a wanton, a heretic; but as a lost child really seeking his Father. He is to be made to know that his Father is really seeking him. He will often be found to be the possessor of a true spiritual rushlight in the midst of his intellectual darkness, and will be an example in person of that paradox in poetry—

“You ask for faith: I give you doubt
To show that faith exists.”

The worshiper goes to church. The haughty Emperor of antiquity, whose conceit framed the presumptuous edict that every retainer should address his royal highness as “Your Eternity,” was promulgating, after all, a universal truth in the heart of a colossal error. He meant the appellation for his *sovereignty*, which was soon crushed to powder in the icy hand of that relentless and ever conquering monarch—death. Had he meant it for his soul, even death would have kissed its

scepter in submission. The title belongs to the emperor, to you, to every man—"Your Eternity." The grandest thing you know about yourself is this, that the red corpuscles of your spiritual blood are quick with the life of the everlasting.

"It must be so! Plato, thou reasonest well!—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond
desire,

This longing after immortality?

Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror

Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?

'Tis the divinity that stirs within us,

'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter
And intimates eternity to man.

Eternity! Thou pleasing, dreadful thought!"

One of the thrilling chapters in ecclesiastical literature is that in which Tertulian summons the soul into court, places it upon the witness stand, and cross-examines it concerning itself. "Take thy stand in the midst, O soul, and say whether thou art a divine and eternal substance, or the very opposite of divine, a mortal thing; whether thou art received from heaven or

sprung from earth. Stand forth, I say, and give thy witness." He summons not the prejudiced soul, "trained in libraries, fed in attic academies and porticoes," but the rude, unkempt, savage soul, and concludes: "These testimonies of the soul are as true as they are simple; as simple as they are common; as common as they are universal; as universal as they are natural; as natural as they are divine." We have not outgrown Tertullian's plea; still it is our joy to hold that

in all ages

Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened."

This great truth of eternity is the meeting house of humanity. It is here alone that it has all things in common. Here the king lays aside his purple, and forgets his scepter. Here the peasant disregards his

blue jeans, and is careless of his kit of tools. Here the king is no lord, the peasant no laborer; both are souls, heirs of immortality, kinsmen of God.

You cannot repress an eternal instinct; it will find some way to express itself. The king and the peasant cannot stay at home, snug and quiet, in castle or cottage, alike walled about with the bulwarks of eternity. They are bound by the very necessities of their nature to go forth to seek, to find, to fellowship with the eternity with which they know themselves to be vitally and everlastingly related. This is why every man worships. Worship is the soul going out to acknowledge, address, and adore. It is the eternal in a soul voicing itself.

The minister is charged with the conduct of public worship. It is his mission not only to lead the services, but to provide such helpful accessories that the soul may find itself in congenial environment and sympathetic atmosphere as it pays its vows in the presence of all the people.

The church building is a not insignificant factor in worship, and few more inter-

esting or instructive chapters could be written upon this theme than that which should portray the reflection of the growth of the spirit of worship as seen in the development of church architecture.

Our own denomination furnishes in this respect a conspicuous illustration. In our historic revolt from ritual and formalism, we abandoned the idea of beauty as a sacrilege. The meeting-houses were built severely plain, not more from necessity than from principle. The principle was mixed with a strong flavor of prejudice, and our denominational task was to liberate the principle of purity in worship from the prejudice in which it had been incarcerated, and by our spirit of flexibility, adapt our provision for worship to current needs. It was thus that gradually the idea of appropriate church architecture changed from the severe to the symmetrical. To-day we build churches beautiful as art can suggest, costly as our ability will allow, and permanent as the granite of the everlasting hills can make them. Growth in our idea of worship has caused a return to the Gothic and Byzantine forms of architecture,

from which in the interests of a pure worship we so strenuously revolted. The increasing attention given to church architecture, even with respect to our mission chapels, is a most hopeful indication of our growing sense of helpfulness in public worship.

The order of service, too, is a worthy concern in public worship. When King James said to our fathers, "You must have a prayer-book and a ritual," those iron spirits replied in thunderous accents, "We won't," and, like many a hunted, hounded heretic since, went to the very opposite extreme and expressed their worship in coldest and most barren fashion,—no beautiful hymns, no inspiring orchestral strains, not even Bible reading in many churches. The sermon was the worship and the intellect outraged the heart. From this there is to-day a decided and grateful return. Not that the sermon is being disparaged, for the demand for trenchant pulpit utterance was never more clamorous than to-day, nor the quality of sermons superior, but there is a gracious recognition of the need of an enriched public worship, which, according to its expression, is being satisfied.

The Episcopal Church in America has been recruited largely from those who have felt the need of a helpful, worshipful service, and Congregationalism has been a rich contributor alike to her priesthood and to her laity. Now there is a distinct purpose among us to afford within our own communion the satisfaction of the needs of our membership. We recognize the Apostles' Creed as our own; the chants, too, are ours; the prayers of the ancient saints are capable of expressing our spiritual aspirations, and upon appropriate occasion we do not hesitate to use them. The characteristic of our polity is adaptability, so that we can employ those forms, responses, creeds, and litanies which meet our need, with perfect propriety and with perfect freedom.

While no Congregational church would desire or permit the imposition of a ritual more than of a creed, still there is an increasing company of those who hope that in the not distant future an order of service may be suggested, possibly by the National Council, which will contribute to the spirit of orderliness among us, and be a model of suggestion for any who may

be attempting to meet a growing sense of need in their own congregation.

But whatever be the special order of service, its mission is ever the same—to assist the worshipful spirit. A performance of any sort, in the pulpit or choir gallery, is distinctly alien to the spirit of worship. The service of song has been largely taken away from the people, and placed in the keeping of professional musicians. To recover the music to its rightful place in the service of public worship is an imperative necessity. On the one hand, the taste of the people needs elevation, for while we are rich in aspiring hymns and inspiring tunes, a lamentable preference for unworthy music is painfully evident. On the other hand, the choir must regard the religious rather than the financial or artistic ministries of sacred song. Of course the best music is greatly to be desired, but there is a choice of the best, just as “there’s odds even in deacons,” and the quartettes are few who do not need Paul Dunbar’s prayer, and fewer still who could not benefit by his “extry trainin’.”

“An’ I hope you’ll tell the singers
’At I bear them no ill will.

'At they all may git to glory
Is my wish and my desire.
But they'll need some extry trainin'
'Fore they join the heavenly choir."

It requires long and persistent effort, generous tact, and a fine determination to rescue a congregation from the quartette and choir master, but when once it has been accomplished the liberty in which the sons of God praise him in his sanctuary reveals itself as indeed glorious freedom when compared with the servitude of sister congregations to professional musicians.

The Scripture lessons and responsive readings are not the least important of the services of public worship. It is not their mission "to fill up the program," or "to occupy the time." They are acts of worship, and as such demand care in selection and dignity in utterance. Many a minister defeats his influence by the shiftless, mechanical, and slovenly manner in which he reads from the book of God.

Concerning public prayer, no words can too strongly portray its importance, or its privilege. To pass the needs, the desires, the hopes, the gratitude of a congregation

through your own spirit, and give these sincere and appropriate utterance, in adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication, is a minister's most precious prerogative. The best preparation for it is the quiet hour of personal communion, in which the minister's own soul is kindled and his own heart melted. True prayer is never formal. You cannot pray to order. It is spirit meeting with spirit, soul fellowshiping with soul, life communing with life. Hence simplicity and fervency are two characteristics of public prayer. A young minister must guard against the temptation to deliver a discourse to God, a sort of a second Sabbath sermon. Be simple, natural, sincere, and permit your heart to have its way, and your public prayers will indeed be expressive of your people's souls and will bestow upon the congregation the blessing of your God.

In concluding these addresses, young gentlemen, suffer the word of exhortation:—

Be real men! Preach real sermons! Discover real audiences! Do not be "dapper young lady preachers!" You have the most glorious of all earthly callings, if you live it gloriously. It will satisfy you in

proportion as you sacrifice for it. Hard, splendidly hard, it is, also noble, magnificently noble. Adorn it with the wealth of your enthusiasm and of your fidelity, and its very difficulties will be revealed to you as its resplendent treasures.

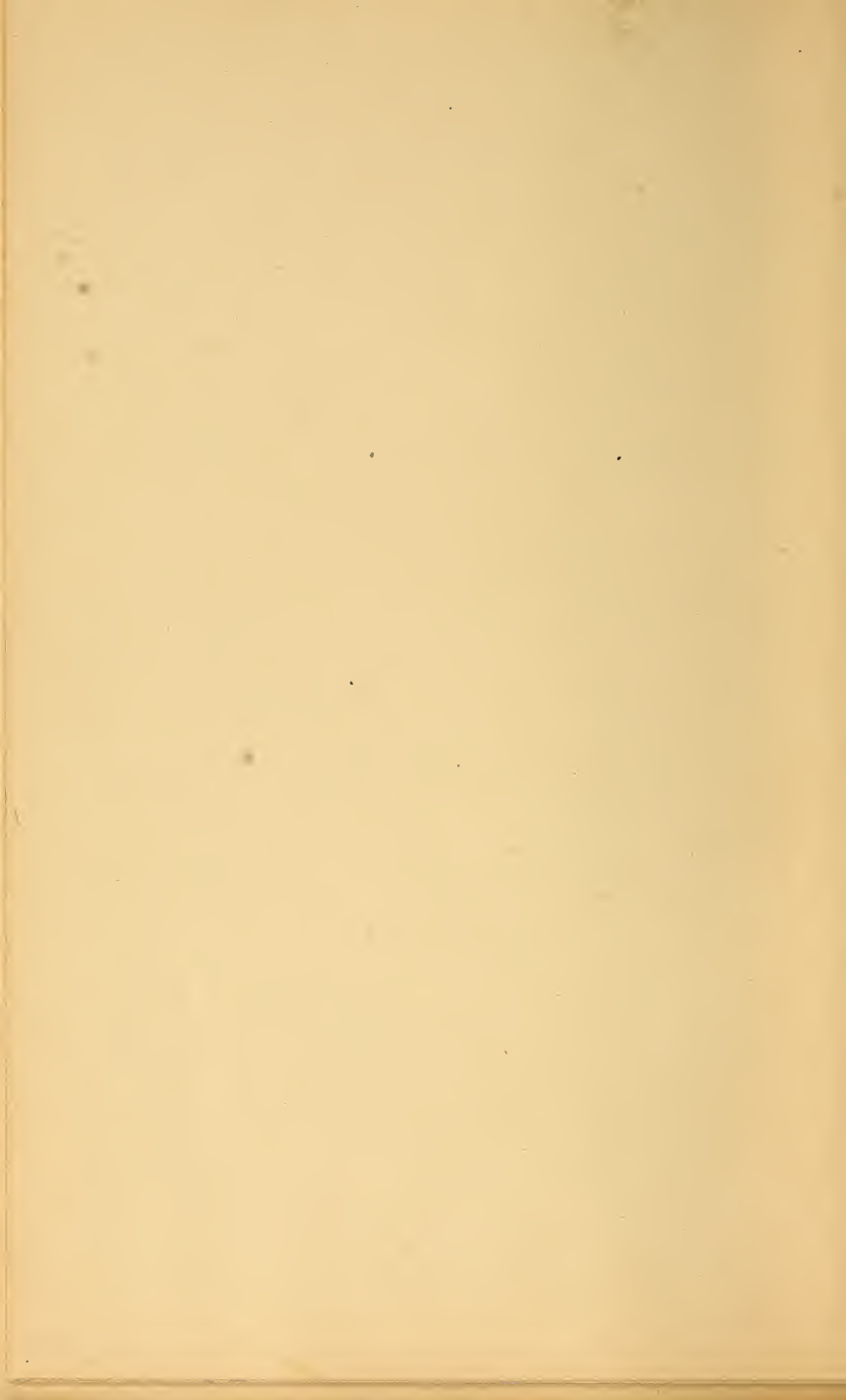
It was a preacher, tried, tempted, sustained, who wrote what ought to be called *The Minister's Hymn*.

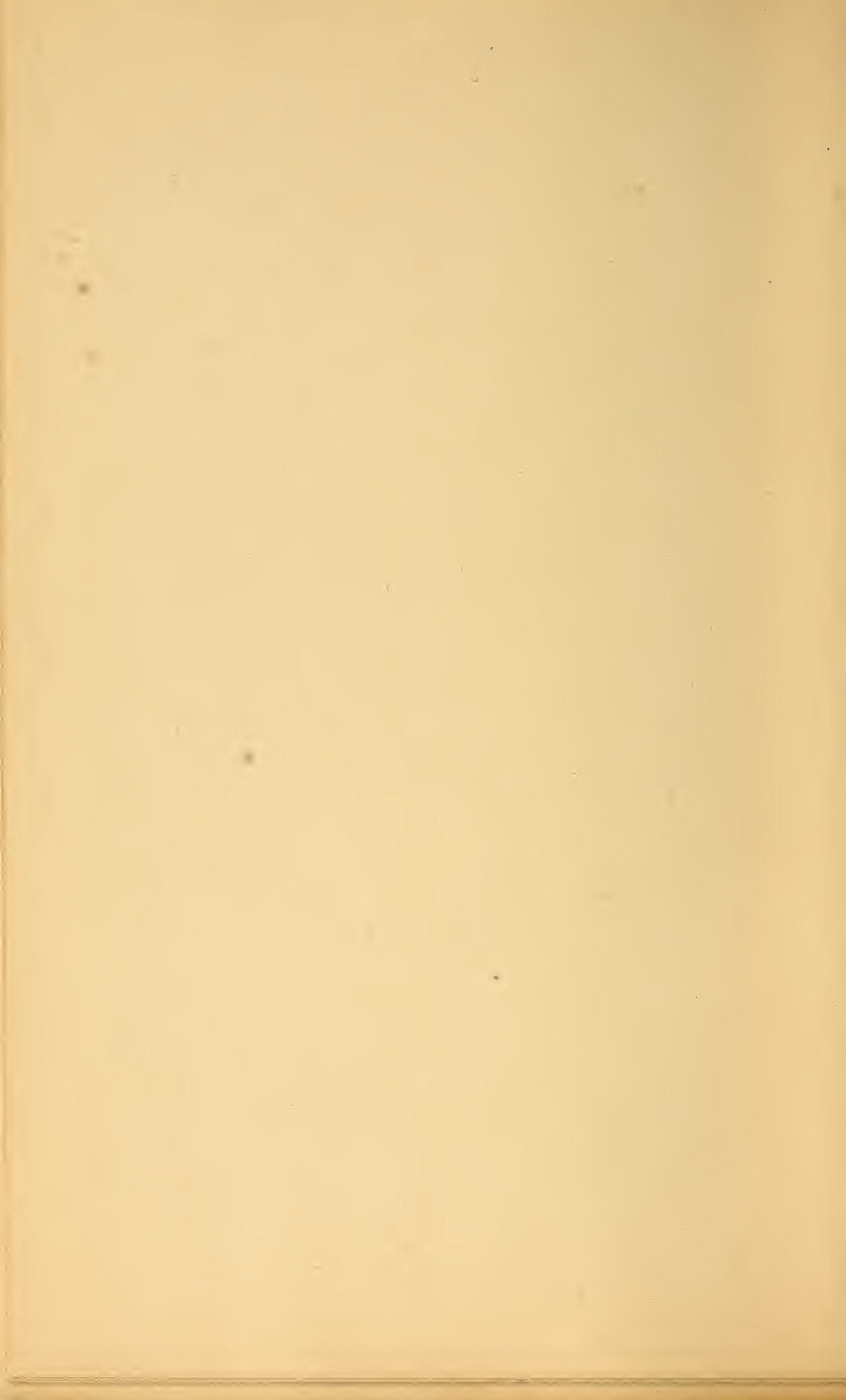
“ Oh, it is hard to work for God,
To rise and take His part
Upon the battle-field of earth
And not sometimes lose heart!

“ Workman of God! Oh, lose not heart,
But learn what God is like,
And in the darkest battle-field
Thou shalt know where to strike.

“ Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field
When He is most invisible.

“ Then learn to scorn the praise of men
And learn to lose with God,
For Jesus won the world through shame
And beckons thee His road.”







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